

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending in the application. Independent claims 1, 16, and 19 have been amended by the present amendment. The amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed (see, e.g., specification at page 17, line 19 to page 18, line 11).

Claim 1 was objected to because "an operator" appears in lines 7 and 12. As amended, the second instance of "an operator" now reads "the operator or a different operator," thus indicating that the first and second fingerprint information reading means read the fingerprint information of either the same or different operators, where the fingerprint information collating means collates the read fingerprint information, regardless of its source (see, e.g., specification at page 11, line 15 to page 13, line 25).

As amended, independent claims 1, 16, and 19 recite an image processing system, a scanner, and a terminal apparatus, respectively, in which fingerprint information stored in the scanner and/or second fingerprint information stored in the terminal apparatus "are deleted upon completion of a reading operation of the document image or when a predetermined time has elapsed before the reading operation is completed" (see, e.g., specification at page 17, line 19 to page 18, line 11).

Claim 19 was rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Publication 2001-045192 (hereinafter "the '192 publication"). Claims 1-18, 20, and 21 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over the '192 publication in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication US 2001/0016912 to Takahashi. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

On page 9 of the Office Action of 06/20/2007, it was admitted that the '192 publication does not teach or suggest "deleting associated information when reading operation completed," for example, as recited in claim 11.

The Takahashi reference was cited allegedly for teaching "deleting associated information" (see page 9, second paragraph of Office Action of 06/20/2007). However, in Takahashi, print data is merely deleted from the print data memory (see paragraph 0049 of Takahashi).

Takahashi does not teach or suggest that fingerprint information stored in a terminal apparatus and/or scanner is deleted after an operation is completed, or when a predetermined period of time has elapsed before completion of the operation.

For example, in the "first embodiment" of Takahashi, there is no teaching or suggestion regarding deletion of first fingerprint pattern data S1 input into a personal computer 2, or second fingerprint pattern data S6 input into a printer 4 (see paragraphs 0042 to 0056 of Takahashi). Similarly, in the "second embodiment" of Takahashi, there is no teaching or suggestion regarding deletion of first fingerprint authentication data S2a (see paragraphs 0057 to 0062 of Takahashi).

For at least the reasons discussed above, even if Takahashi was somehow combined with the '192 publication, there would be no teaching or suggestion of the Applicant's claimed invention.

It is believed that the claims are in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: September 20, 2007

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